



Ruach Chaim Living with Spirit Lifting Up our Lives in Trying Times

Mussar Gathering - January 26, 2025

CAPTURING THE SPIRIT – FINDING LIGHT IN DARKNESS

Mussar Creative Expression

with David Chernobilsky, Helaine Sheias, Gali Ettner-Levkovitz

We present the breath-taking photography exhibit of Israeli artist, David Chernobilsky, “*Akurot / Displaced*,” through the lens of Mussar. Through Chernobilsky’s lens, we witness not only the deep pain of women displaced since the outbreak of war on October 7th, but also their enduring spirit as they are forced to leave behind their homes, communities, and the lives they once knew. These images offer a visual testament of *Ruach Chaim* and the resilience, strength, and dignity these women encompass in the face of unimaginable adversity.

Chernobilsky’s work reminds us that the challenges faced by these women, are part of a larger narrative of resilience and hope. His photographs not only tell the story of displacement but also challenge us to recognize the strength found in vulnerability, the power of community, and the healing that can emerge from shared humanity.

David Chernobilsky’s website: <https://www.krop.com/DavidChernobilsky/#/>



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Source Materials

Illusion by Michael Zats

(Translated by Heather Silverman, Michael Bohnen, and Rachel Korazim)

Amazing

How everything looks

Unchanged,

Even

When nothing

Remained

The same.

"First a person should put his house together, then his town, then the world."

– Rabbi Salanter

"Man is like a bird. The bird can soar higher and higher, as long as it keeps moving its wings nonstop. If it stops for a moment, it falls and crashes down. So is man..."

– Rabbi Salanter



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"Asceticism, which is a noble trait for those who are striving for elevation, is only in the realm of the person for themselves. But when it comes to matters of benefit and the pleasure of others... the duty is to make use of the opposite of asceticism. To go out into the marketplaces and the streets of the city, to seek to fulfill the good of one's friend. And certainly, the good of the many."

– Rabbi Salanter

Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe's introduction to the *middah* of *kavod*, *Alei Shur*, Vol. II, as referenced in Rabbi David Jaffe's, *Additional Resources for Changing the World from the Inside Out*:

"... *Kavod* is external behavior mandated by and appropriate to a reality of inner holiness. Behold, you have within you a *Tzelem Elokim Kadosh* (holy divine image) – this requires you to treat yourself with a certain level of self-respect..."

“Blessed is the match” by Hannah Szenesh

אֲשֶׁרִי הַגִּפְרוֹר שֶׁנִּשְׂרַף וְהִצִּית לְהַבּוֹת

Blessed is the match that is consumed in kindling flame.

אֲשֶׁרִי הַלֵּהָבָה שֶׁבָּעֵרָה בְּסִתְּרִי לְבָבוֹת

Blessed is the flame that burns in the secret fastness of the heart.

אֲשֶׁרִי הַלְּבָבוֹת שֶׁיָּדְעוּ לְחִדּוֹל בְּכָבוֹד

Blessed is the heart with wisdom to stop its beating for honor's sake ...

אֲשֶׁרִי הַגִּפְרוֹר שֶׁנִּשְׂרַף וְהִצִּית לְהַבּוֹת

Blessed is the match that is consumed in kindling flame.